



May 2021

Dear Friend of Israel,

I am on my way to the USA! **It has been more than a year since I was on a plane.** But with the Coronavirus letting up in Israel, we are finally free to travel. It is not without a little trepidation that I booked my tickets and started to make arrangements. And the thought of sitting in a mask for more than 12 hours doesn't thrill me. But I am so looking forward to once again seeing some of the wonderful friends and supporters who have stayed faithful to Israel all this time. I can't wait to get on that plane!

Travel has always been an important part of our relationship. Whether I was able to meet you in person in Israel or in your hometown, personal meetings have always been important to me. Of course, I love hosting people in my own community.

I have been particularly moved during this past year, by the care and love that you have continued to show towards my country and my fellow Israelis. **Enclosed with this letter is a Heartland Story that shares the story of some of the people whom you have helped recently.** As you read this Heartland Story, please know that you have made a real difference. Thank you for helping and caring for so many who are struggling during this time of crisis.

I am eager to resume travel and visit with you, if and when the time is right. To meet you in your home environment, to meet your pastor, your congregation, your friends – this has always held special value for me. And to hear the love and support for Israel that you and your friends have always showered upon me – that made every mile traveled worthwhile.

But this past year, we learned to stay in touch on zoom, by email and by phone. **I was so touched by the numbers that joined our zoom meetings or who watched the recordings at a later time.** I believe that zoom will continue to bless us with a platform to study Bible or discuss Israeli current events, together with Zionists from all over the world.

I am reaching out to you today and hoping you will connect to me, in a special way. **If you would like to chat by zoom or by phone or perhaps even host a virtual or live meeting, any time in the coming months, please let me know.** I will do whatever I can to make it happen. And once air travel is possible between your country and Israel, I hope you will come and visit, with a group or on your own. Let us hope and pray that we will once again be able to shake each other's hand, here in Israel or in your country, and strengthen the ties that bind us together. May G-d bless you with good health above all.

Sincerely,

Sondra Oster Baras
Director, Israel Office

P.S. Enclosed is a special flyer with an opportunity to plant trees for Mother's Day or a Blueberry field for Father's Day! You'll receive an appropriate certificate to honor your loved one!